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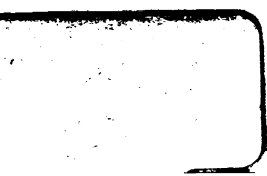
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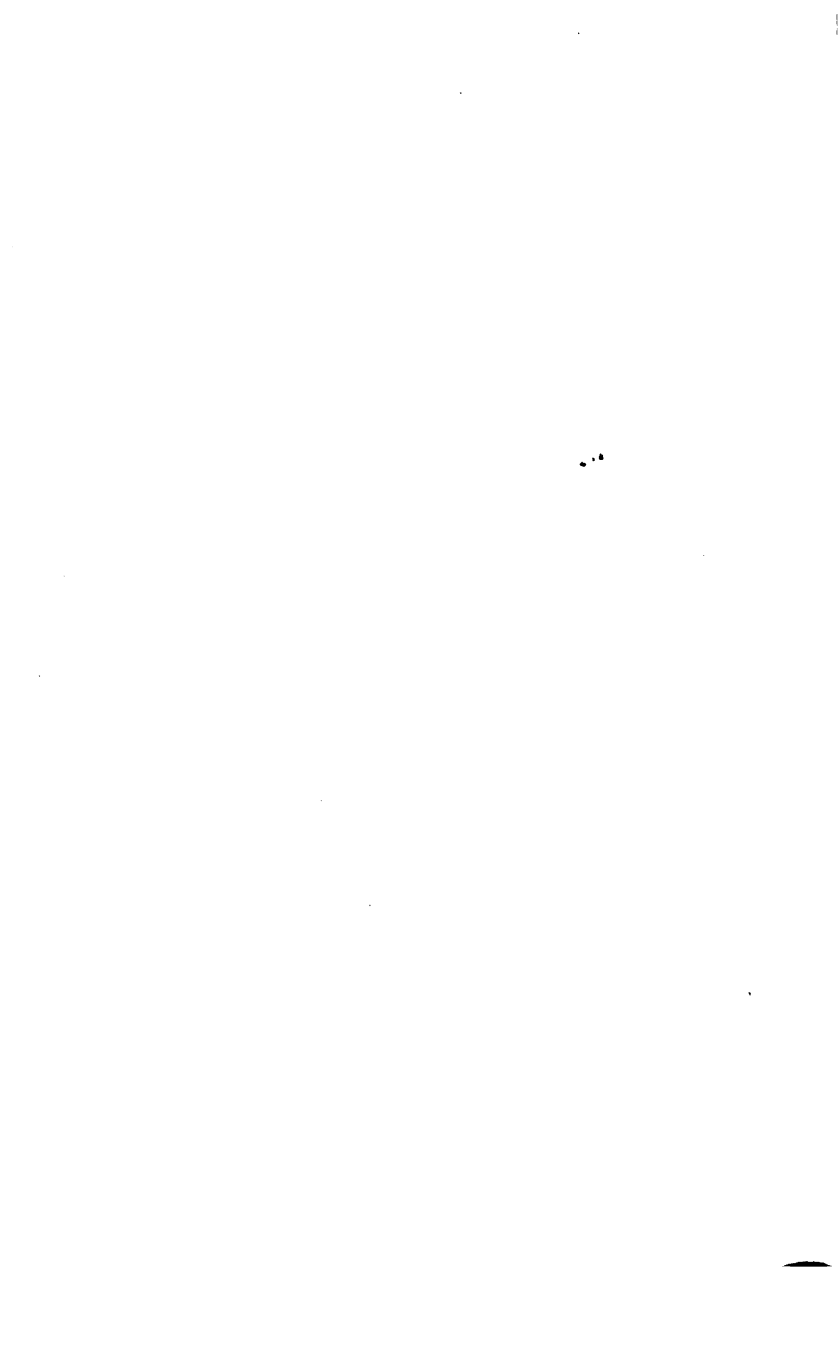
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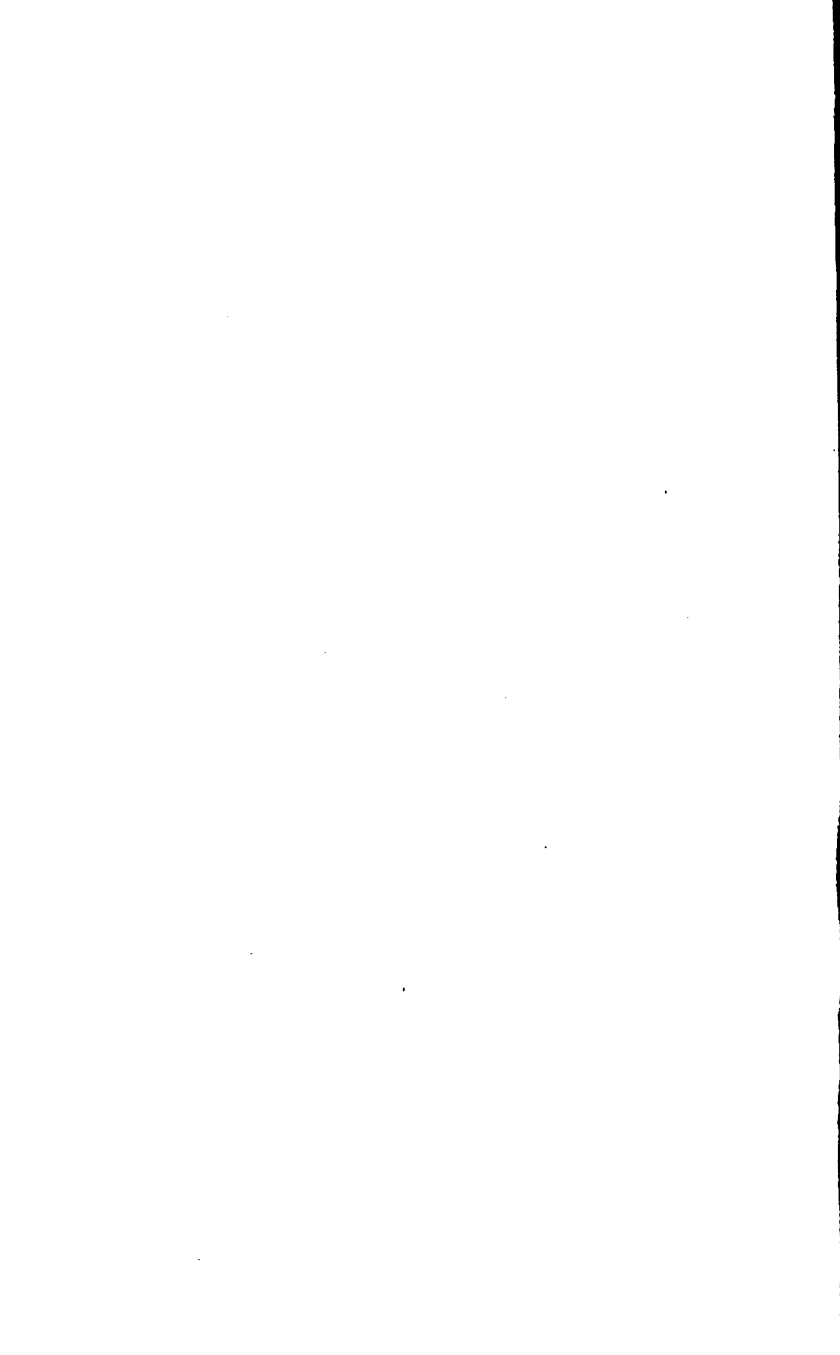
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IMPRESSIONS

OF

THE AMMERGAU PASSION-PLAY.

BY AN OXONIAN.

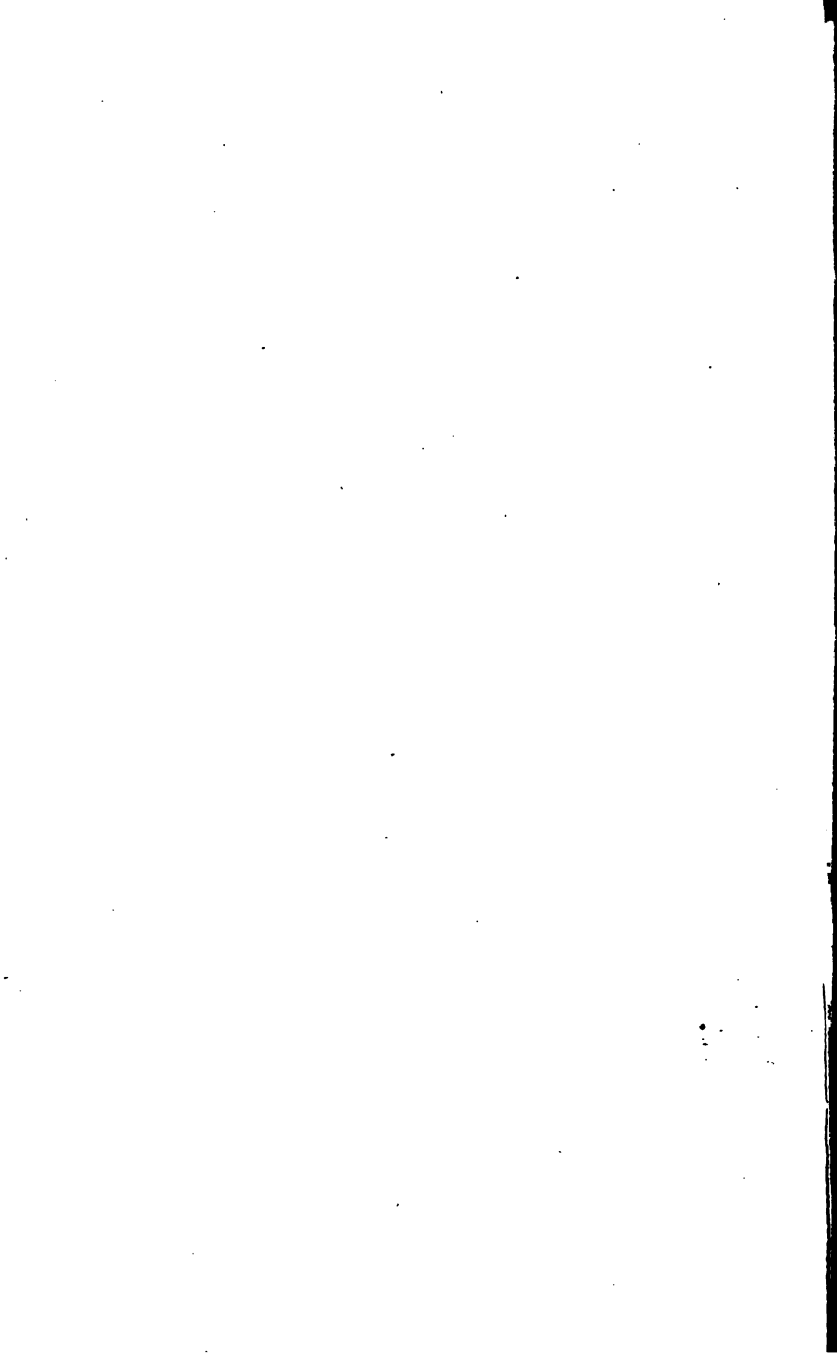
1870.



LONDON:

J. T. HAYES, LYALL PLACE, EATON SQUARE, W.;
AND
4, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

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IMPRESSIONS

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OF

THE AMMERGAU PASSION-PLAY.

BY AN OXONIAN.

1870.

Henry Scott Holland

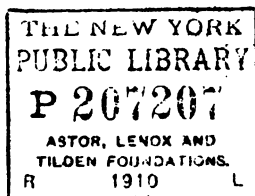


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IMPRESSIONS OF

THE AMMERGAU PASSION-PLAY.

I must make two apologies for this essay; first, for having ventured to write on a subject which the papers have already, it may be thought, worked to death; and, secondly, for my almost total ignorance of the language in which the Play is written. With regard to the first, I would plead that the numerous popular accounts are just what enable me to omit a good deal of dry description and explanation, and to give the impressions produced, and the reflections excited, by the performance, without appearing to wander too much from the subject, or failing to take the reader along with me; and though this impressional view has been given before this by the ablest hands, it has yet been so lightly and briefly touched upon, or so hampered by the wish to soothe and smooth down prejudices against the Play, that it seems to me that there is still room for an attempt, however humble and weak, to give something of the fuller force of the mountain-drama.

And this attitude of mind in writing will, I trust, extenuate my second failing; for opera-goers will, I think, understand how that the impressions received, though they may not be in literal and accurate accordance with the letter of the dialogue, will yet come to one with a purer and clearer intensity from the mere effect of the action and the sound than when one is haggling over the meaning of the words.

Of course, the *spirit* of the Ammergau Play was evident enough, owing to its loyal fidelity to the Bible story; moreover, whenever I did recognise the words, it was on the utterance of some familiar text, which gained in the subtle power of joyful recognition without losing the strong pleasure of

novelty, and, above all, had none of the flavour of vulgarity which I cannot but think must have clung to my own tongue if heard in such a rare atmosphere from the lips of British peasantry.

And if the following reflections sound too poor and commonplace and ordinary for such a strange and marvellous scene, I would ask you to remember that, at exciting and intent moments of life, it is often not the originality of the idea that produces the impression, but rather the overpowering vividness, the vehement realization, in the very eyes and heart, of threadbare opinions and thoughts as old as the hills.

I may mention, in case I be thought too partial, that I got to the Play an hour late, had almost nothing to eat the whole day, had to stand the greater part of the time close by a door where I was disturbed by every spectator that came in or went out; and to crown all, that it poured with rain during four hours of the performance, on Chorus and on the Jews in their beautiful robes, as well as on more than half the audience; and if any one dared to adopt the selfish but convenient device of raising an umbrella, an enthusiastic playgoer from behind battered it in with a stout mountain-club till it was put down often with its wires making most uncomfortable angles through the rents. Altogether, these, it will be allowed, were not the most favourable circumstances possible for such a spectacle.

AMMERGAU lies close by the gate of the hills, just where the first clump of Alps lifts its everlasting head suddenly and sturdily from the undulating Bavarian plains. The imagination is ever on the *qui-vive* as it first catches sight of those blue heights towering in royal might far above the quiet woods and lakes of the everyday world; but its attention is heightened and quickened when it knows that there, in the bosom of those great hills, is preserved, not a dead relic, but a living manifestation of the Faith which animated the hearts and homes of England in "the days before the Flood;" the Faith of which Shakespeare wrote; the Faith which has left us, in every English village and town, the carven capitals, the crisp and twisted tracery, the grotesque headstones and grinning gurgoyles, under which we, in these latter and more

grimy days, still delight to live and pray. For the familiarity with sacred things which that Faith fostered is the same, whether it flings itself into the moulded stones of our old Churches, or associates without offence the mock pageantry of the stage with the most solemn and mysterious realities of religion. It is a familiarity which breeds no contempt, but from which we, with the unhealthy sensitiveness of an over-wrought self-consciousness, seem to take an effeminate pride in shrinking, confusing the familiarity of an unquestioning and innocent faith with the audacity of irreverent unbelief. The mediæval artist felt no qualms at introducing himself or his friend into the midst of Apostles and Prophets; he saw no reason why the Madonna should not appear with his family at her side; he let all the play of his fancy loose in carving hideous demons writhing in the nooks and corners of the holy places. All his life was spent in the bodily presence, as it were, of spiritual Beings; wooden Christs, painted Saints, greeted him at every turn of the road, on every wall, under every tree. His daily life could not possibly be looked on as one thing and his religious life another; he did not always have to speak of the latter with solemn face and bated breath. Rather both were "inveterately convolved," the one inseparable from the other, with the actions of both in complete harmony.

It is this same spirit which you see in activity as you drive from Munich to the scene of the Passion-Play; every image and picture recall it; and it is only by realizing the existence and force of such a spirit as this that the full meaning of Ammergau can be understood. All the refinement of these peasants' lives takes a religious tinge. The child, when it first tries its hand with a pencil, instead of scribbling a pig or a cow, probably scrawls a Madonna. The man who attempts to give any beauty to his works and ways, covers his cottage-walls with Holy Families. Ammergau itself is full of wood-carvers; and carving means crucifixes. Thus it is that the Play does not stand out, in sharp isolation, from a background of dreary and inharmonious common-place; rather it is the culmination of all that the years, and days, and hours bring round to every one, whether of the actors or the audience; it is in heartiest sympathy with their daily

thoughts ; it is far from being loosely associated with their highest act of worship into which we must remember how largely symbolic action enters, how strongly the fact is clung to, as the true core of reality ; it is itself almost a religious service ; there is but one step from the seats in the Church to the benches in the Theatre ; there is no Dichotomy, no dualism ; all is mingled, intertwined ; no secularism stands over against religious thought ; to them the Word of Life is, as far as can be, that " which their ears have heard, which their eyes have seen, which they have looked upon, and their hands have handled."

These are the reflections with which the sober tourist turns off the main road from Munich at Oberau, to find himself in the midst of a stream of walkers who are following their emptied vans up a tremendously steep gorge, hung with woods and over-awed by rocky peaks, to a high and hidden valley, along which he rattles, past the great deserted monastery of Ettal, which his historical instinct may lead him to conclude had something to do with elevating the tone of the villagers and their Play, into the crowded Ammergau, now choked with peasants, a fair number of respectable citizens from Munich, etc., and here and there the familiar forms and faces of his own unmistakeable race. He will, if possible, secure a bed ; if very lucky, he may pick up a mouthful of food in the village inns, where shouting mountaineers are consuming the most appalling amount of Bavarian beer ; and he will perhaps wonder how much of that beer, excellent as it is, may be calculated to be compatible with the reverence which he hopes to witness on the morrow. Our Anglican friend is probably worked up into rather an artificial state of tension, and is not altogether prepared for the thorough-going holiday-spirit which surges and bubbles around him.

But let him go to bed happy ; for he will find, when Sunday comes, that for eight hours, those noisy tongues will hardly utter a word ; and that 5000 of these people will be kept in absolute control by a few doorkeepers of their own rank and position ; that those outside the Theatre will creep about on tiptoe and talk in whispers for fear of disturbing those within. There will be no want of reverence, he may

be assured ; and it will be more marked, I think, in the men than in the women.

The Play forms a complete whole, made up of about fifteen parts, each of which parts is complete in itself. Each part consists of three elements, Chorus, Tableaux, and Dialogue. These three are welded into unity by the spirit of the Part which they form : this spirit expresses its single meaning in the way appropriate to each element. Thus the Chorus explains how the Tableaux illustrate what is represented in the Dialogue, and points to the moral of both. It is kept more distinctly as a medium between the audience and the acting than was the Greek Chorus. It takes no part whatever in the action itself, but confines itself entirely to its work of preparation and application. Thus its warnings and advice, while they derive from the Tableaux all the impressive vividness with which the eye can aid the ear, (an impressiveness which is heightened by the fixed, intent character of these picturesque scenes,) still do not intrude themselves on those solemn words and acts when their presence would seem impertinent, but leave you with both your imagination and your moral will strung to the requisite pitch and temper, waiting with earnest expectation for the truth, in all its reality, to be revealed ; ready, like the white Cloth of S. Veronica, to receive the impress of your Saviour's face.

Nothing can be more artistic than this triple arrangement. It gives room for an infinite play of balanced and interwoven thoughts and meanings and types. The appropriateness of it is evident : for the Old Testament is used with such effect in the Tableaux that not only is the unity of the Bible strongly enforced, but the audience brings to the representation of the Gospel History just that attitude of mind which S. Paul ascribed to the Patriarchs and to the old Gentile world. It is travelling for the fulfilment of the promise.

Again, this arrangement is based on the true dramatic ideal in which the character of representation is never stretched so as to border on deceit. There is no miserable attempt to conceal the fact that everybody knows : no clap-trap appeal to the delight of momentary self-deception : no tickling of the eye and ear into forgetfulness of the rational standpoint of histrionic imitation : no confused mixing of

the two worlds of reality and fiction. On the contrary, care and pains are taken to impress upon the audience that this it witnesses is *mere* acting, done with a special moral purpose.

By this means again that variety is got, that break from the extreme excitement of the main action which the ordinary Drama has to secure by an introduction of minor, and perhaps comic characters: only that here this very break, this variety, instead of dragging the attention off, is always leading it up to the supreme effect. Above all, by this exhibition of the Old Testament, the mind is induced to summon up all its old memories into the service of the main drama. It sees the Passion as the central point of the world's history; it recognises its eternal purpose into which are gathered and absorbed the meaning of the Past, the hope of the Future, the destiny of kings, the ebb and flow of empires: it presses on, delighted, through all the ancient tales of Joseph and Adam, and Abraham and Jonah: and, as the strains of the chorus take up their parable and read its inner meaning, and write it on the tablets of the heart, the mind finds that by this living tragedy its own moral being as an individual is bound up with and woven into the whole life of Humanity. Thus, the higher the Stage and the loftier the Theme, the more intense, at the same degree, is the personal interest. The regal magnificence of the "grand style," while, raising the whole action into the realms of the High Drama, still never removes it from out of the sphere of the humblest spectator: rather the very greatness and sublimity bring it all more forcibly home to his heart.

This is the order of the Parts:—

TABLEAUX.

Adam and Eve driven out of Eden.
A Cross encircled by kneeling group.

Joseph's brethren plotting his death.

Tobias leaving his home.

Forlorn bride of the Canticle.

SCENES OF DIALOGUE.

Entry into Jerusalem; and
Cleansing of the Temple.

Pharisees plotting against
Jesus.

Jesus leaving the home at
Bethany.

Dinner at Simon's house,
and anointing by the
Magdalene.

TABLEAUX.

Ahasuerus puts away Vashti for Esther.

Israelites fed with manna.
The spies return with the bunch of grapes.

Selling of Joseph to merchants.

Adam and his children tilling "in the sweat of their brows."
Joab killing Amasa as he kisses him.
Samson pulling down the Temple of Dagon.

Micaiah struck for prophesying by order of Jehosaphat.

Naboth stoned by false witnesses.
Job in ashes tempted by his wife.

Murder of Abel : Cain's despair.

Daniel accused before the king.
King David's servants insulted before Ammon.

Joseph's coat shown to Jacob.
Abraham sacrificing Isaac.

Joseph's triumph in Egypt.

Israelites drawing lots for scapegoat.

Isaac carrying the wood for the sacrifice.
Fiery serpents and brazen serpent.

Jonah and the whale.
The Egyptians drowned in the Red Sea.

SCENES OF DIALOGUE.

Lament over Jerusalem.
Peter and John go to secure room for Passover.
Judas caught by the Pharisees.

The Last Supper.

Judas's bargain with the Sanhedrim.

Agony in the Garden.

The Betrayal.

Christ before Annas.

Christ before Caiaphas.
The Denial.

Judas giving up the money :
his agony and death.

Christ before Pilate.
Christ before Herod.

Christ crowned with thorns :
scourged.

Christ before Pilate's judgment-seat.
The choice of Barabbas.

The road to Calvary.
The Crucifixion.

The Resurrection.
Appearances of Christ.
Final scene of glory.

The Chorus, twenty in number, step out half from each side of the broad stage in front of the Theatre proper. They

advance slowly till the two leaders meet; then they turn round and face the audience in a long line. They are all in the same long robes of various colours, reaching down to their feet. The Head or Foreman, a fine man with a black beard, addresses the audience, explanatory of what is to follow: then they all sing a melodious chant and at last draw back into two semi-circles, one on each side of the Theatre: and as the curtain rises for the Tableaux, one of their number sings an air exhibiting the "motif," as the curtain falls, they all again advance to the front, catching up the air and chanting the appropriate warnings and exhortations; this over, they all file out, and the real scene begins. This is generally acted inside the covered Theatre, but in the crowded scenes, the greater part of the stage is taken up.

The Impression produced by the Chorus is entirely the effect of its dignity. Every one of its movements is slow and deliberate; each member of it does exactly the same as the others: all is calm and studied. There is but little excitement, and the variety of each scene only produces a measured change in the temper of the songs, the pathos of which rises and falls without any strong effort or violent emotion. The music is always pretty, with a light Mozartesque prettiness, sometimes it is fine: but its general character is rather that of a long chant with a refrain which, with some slight variation, seems for ever recurring over and over again. I kept wondering how the Chorus knew where it had got to, the music seemed so alike all through. Then again the Chorus has only three motions of the hands, one calling attention, one for exhortation, one for warning. All the hands rise and fall together with wonderful evenness and regularity. A profane person would call it sea-sawing; but there was such a calm and quiet solemnity about it that at last a dreamy interest of association, a hoary dignity began to cling round it. On the round of movements went, continuous and unchanging, with a rhythmic cadence like the refrain of an old ballad, until you look the same sort of half-attentive pleasure in it as in the ceaseless plashing of a fountain. There is a mesmeric influence, a downy power in *repetition*, which is apparently more strongly felt in primitive times than in our own. We are too

restless and scurried to appreciate this poetry of conservatism, but it is evidently as natural as it is healthy. It was this power which the Chorus exercised. Everything it did was multiple or at least double. The Leader was not a centre to the others, he simply headed one half. The dresses appeared various enough, but on examining you found that the succession of colours was the same in each semi-chorus. The very sex of the performers was concealed. This was all in thorough harmony with the monotonous swaying of the hands, with the sing-song swing of the Chant, and all served to keep up to the full the characteristic notion of the Chorus as a musical *accompaniment*, that which marks the *time* of the song, as it were, reflecting and repeating and answering in its Chords the modulations of the main melody.

Throughout the Play, indeed, is to be noticed especially that tendency to uniformity, to balance, which marks purer and simpler days than our own. The curb that was set on the imagination here was worthy of Hellenic moderation, of Sophoclean tone. These Bavarian peasants knew how to avoid, with marked emphasis, that extravagance which is the life of the Modern Drama. They could not understand anything onesided or sensational. I have spoken of the restraint and regularity of the Chorus. The Play illustrated it as fully. For instance, when Mary Magdalene was on the point of coming in to wash our Saviour's feet, I kept expecting, impregnated with dramatic traditions, how she would rush across the proud Pharisee's Hall, how with eager eyes and streaming hair she would look wildly round and then hurl herself at our Lord's feet and flood them with tears and kisses. But nothing of the kind took place. A gentle figure stole across the room, almost unobserved; she sank down and quietly bowed her head as she let the oil fall carefully drop by drop, and wiped it without hurry or excitement, with one lifted lock of hair. The whole thing was done rather with the full and solemn consciousness, as it were, of an overwhelming resolution which she was bound by the truth of ages to perform, and which would be known wherever the Gospel would be preached, than with the irregular passion of an impetuous impulse.

It is this same love of balance which has defined the characters of Judas and of Pilate, so they may as well be discussed at once.

It is only necessary to recall the deep-dyed villany, the lowering brows, the devilish malice of the wretches who flare upon us out of the pages of *Miss Braddon* or the *Adelphi* melodramas, in order to appreciate the artistic restraint, refinement, and subtlety of the *Passion-play's* traitor. The author has laid well hold of two great facts. First, that it is impossible to suppose that Judas was a deep-designing hypocrite when our Lord chose him, or that he clung to our Lord through good report and evil all for the sake of getting at the end thirty pieces of silver. Secondly, that no man becomes fearfully wicked at one fell swoop. Judas, therefore, takes a prominent part in the divine conversations between our Lord and his Apostles: he is generally in opposition, indeed, to his Master, but rather with the honest temper of an inquirer, like St. Peter (as it seemed to me). He seems as if he could not grasp our Lord's meaning, could not comprehend it, and so pushes his difficulties home. There is felt to be a barrier between the two, but it does not appear to be exactly a conscious fault of Judas that it is there. He is eager in his attempts to surmount it, but his eagerness is always neutralised by a stubborn questioning spirit. He has not taken in to his heart and imagination that which might prevent him falling away. Affection has not thrown its chains about him. If circumstances favour a withdrawal from Christ, a fall, it is possible, it is natural that he should give way.

The favouring circumstances are most artfully contrived. After the waste of the precious ointment and the departure from Bethany, Judas lingers behind alone, and broods over the incomprehensible carelessness of his Lord, both of money and life. Why should He throw away all worldly happiness and walk heedlessly into the dangers of Jerusalem? Evidently He must be sure of His own safety, He can deliver Himself easily enough by a miracle from peril and murder; and in the meantime Judas himself must look after the bag, and manage to keep it full enough. It is not comfort he wants, for he has lived like our Lord these years without

a hole in which to rest his head. It is thrift that fascinates him, thrift as thrift. While he is thus weaving a web of obscure thoughts round his moral self, the very thoughts themselves seem to be taking visible shape and substance as, behind him, in the shadowy background, creep in and cluster, with dark whisperings, the Pharisee's servants waiting to ensnare their victim. One by one they sneak noiselessly up to him and let their snaky hints glide into his ears. He is startled by their suggestions, indignant at first, but still they fall in too well with his own mutterings to be altogether repelled. As he glances hurriedly round, they close in upon him encircling him: each wily persuasion is backed up by a more insinuating promise. Our Lord, they hint, must anyhow be stopped preaching; the Pharisees have settled that. All Judas does is to give a favourable opportunity for them to do that which Christ had almost brought upon himself. Judas gives way: he negotiates with our Lord's bitterest enemies: he finds himself engaged in necessary deceit: he gives the fatal kiss; he sees our Lord condemned to a frightful death, and then, and then only, the whole depth of his terrible crime opens out to his horror-stricken gaze. In vain for him then to protest against the treachery of the High Priests and the Pharisees: the bitter mock "See thou to that" smites him in the face. It is in vain to cry out that he has been deceived, that he knew not what he was doing. In vain, for whither can he turn? He dare not ask pardon of the innocent blood he has betrayed. He has cast off himself the badge of his servitude, the beggarly coins at which the world has priced his soul, and alone on the dark earth with his despair, what can he do but toss himself in reckless agony out of a miserable life into a yawning hell?

This is the conception of the character which the Ammergau Judas appeared to me to carry out with steady and powerful effect. He lets himself down into the stream of intrigue, and then is unconsciously swept to the rapids. Throughout one felt, "this is a living man, tempted as I am, falling as I might:" and one shrank back in consequence with a far colder shudder from his crime than if he had been presented as a loathed murderer and fiend with whose villany

it was impossible ever to feel the slightest sympathy. A human pity hung over the poor wretch as he counted over his coins with the feverish haste of one who strives to crush all other thoughts out of his mind ; or as he stamped like a wild-beast at bay and dashed the money at the feet of those hard Pharisees into whose cold, scornful eyes he looked in vain for hope or mercy ; or, yet again, as he turned his face, white and ghastly, to the dark sky and withered tree which preached to him self-slaughter. Yet through all, the actor kept his head, so to speak : he never let himself be thrown off his balance ; never raved or yelled or tore his hair. His wildest gestures would have seemed tame to a London audience. The passion was never allowed to overwhelm the dignity of the man ; and even the pathos that was thrown into the part (and it was great) seemed to be a modern refinement. For the people, I suppose from some incurable tradition, were determined to regard Judas as a kind of comic character, at whose deepest despair, when he flung down the money and even when he was hanging himself, it was their privilege to laugh. Vice, however powerful, has always, as in Dante's demons and Goethe's Devil, a bitterly ridiculous side in its ineffectualness.

Pilate was drawn with beautiful care. Cold and unimpassioned he was, but still with a melancholy interest in the good which he had not the energy to pursue to the uttermost. A sad hopelessness "sickled o'er the native hue of his resolution." He withstands the first onslaught of the Pharisees upon Christ. He is only induced to yield by a general excitement. This is carried out in the finest dramatic scene of all. The Pharisees have failed with Pilate and with Herod, the "lusting king," opposed in his easy-going selfishness to the doubting intellectual Roman Governor. Driven to desperation, they play their last card and call in the rabble. Down the street you see them pouring with the people at their heels. They march in front, leading and inspiring them with their fiery speeches, but, in the true demagogic spirit, they are hurried along by the very force which they have themselves awakened. The stone has been set rolling and it gathers fury as it rolls. The rage of the Priests is echoed and re-echoed by the wild frenzy of the mob.

Priest and people, they stand each side of the balcony of Pilate, like mad dogs in the leash, howling for blood. It is indeed a tremendous scene; below the balcony, between the people and the priests, stand two figures in all the mockery of pitiful contrast; the calm, gentle, and magnificent Christ, and the ragged wretch, Barabbas. Alas! vivid as is the contrast to the philosophical Roman, it is too cold and satirical to catch the eye of religious ferocity; "Not this man, but Barabbas!"

This astounding answer discloses the deadly zeal that has fired the mob; and here the Bible history is interpreted with a most subtle regard to Pilate's character. For the washing of the hands is only an hypocritical shuffle, if Pilate, as is generally explained, is surrendering the innocent in order to save himself from accusation before Cæsar, or to curry favour with the Jews. The Ammergau Pilate is not capable of such audacious and barefaced self-deceit. This is how he argues. The fierceness of the people threatens a bloody tumult if its hunger is unappeased: many lives might be lost. Were it not better to sacrifice one man than to risk the savage break-out of a city riot? It is thus on the mob's account that Pilate gives in: it has become politically expedient that "one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not;" and this expediency has been forced upon the nation by its own mad fury. This is the truth to which Pilate makes his last appeal when he "dips his hands in innocency," and the symbol of renunciation is accepted in full as the awful shout rings through the theatre, "His blood be on us and on our children."

It is in this spirit of natural refinement, this subtle feeling for tone that the charm of these characters consists. The wickedness that has become a byword is not left in coarse outline; the bad man is shown capable of good, a compound of good and evil; and in both Judas and Pilate the mastering fact is kept clear in its terrible reality that evil takes hold of a man as far as a man takes hold of it. The great crimes for which men are held responsible grow upon them half unconsciously: the will is in full force and vigour only at the beginning, but it is judged by the end. As for the Pilate, his only sin, I suppose, was a want of heart, a want

of religious conviction and earnestness. His attitude of mind seemed to be that of a sad scepticism, asking half proudly, half despairingly, "What is Truth?" It was unable to comprehend, and so to control, the raging wrath of a rougher but more thorough faith. Still in him the Old World empire stood condemned, in that its very position compelled it to sacrifice justice to expediency.

This long talk about Judas and Pilate might make you suppose that they absorbed the interest of the audience; but it only means that they required fuller explanation. In the play, as in the Bible, it was most remarkably true that there was one figure off whom, whenever He appeared, it was impossible to take your eyes, one face it was impossible to forget. Nothing in the whole performance is more impressive than the way in which all was made to culminate in the great centre. My first thought, and almost my only thought, when I recall that day, is still and always of a confused stage across which is sweeping a tall-robed form, with a pale sad face, and long rolling air falling down to his shoulders, the very figure and dress and look and motions which, picture after picture, had so imbedded in my heart that they had become almost the only conception I could form, had become invested with the very personality of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Joseph Mair has the most splendid figure of any man I ever saw. His features are not marked or prominent, but are imprinted with a majestic melancholy, which is heightened by the wanness of his complexion. The type of Christ he represented is not that of early art, not the chestnut-haired and bearded Christ. There is a strong touch of the Leonardesque in his colourless solemnity, in his thought-laden sadness; but the general appearance, the dress, and the black hair recall rather the more popular Christ known so well in modern altar pictures and images—the Christ that looks down from every wall and hangs on every Crucifix in the best foreign churches. There was no mistaking him; the first glance quite startled one with its absolute familiarity; it seemed as if it was impossible ever to have had any other notion but this of the Saviour's appearance. For the style of face, I know nothing that will give a better idea of it than the face of Christ in a

curious picture of the Agony in the garden, by Gian Bellini, in the National Gallery. Mair's voice is strong and full, and fills without effort the whole theatre. It is used in that forcible monotone peculiar, I think, to German public speaking. The dignity of the man is marvellous. A mysterious grandeur appeared to drape him from head to foot. He stood among his disciples like a full moon among the stars; a natural awe bowed their heads as he lifted his hand and breathed his blessing over them. No pains were spared to break down this majesty; the soldiers dragged him and pushed him, stripped him, spit at him, struck him in the face with the most vivid reality, but so great was the effect of his calm dignity that you felt quite a shudder of horror as they touched him; you trembled with a sort of fright at their temerity when they mocked and buffeted and scourged him. Through all those long wearying scenes, dragged from house to house, court to palace, palace to court, court to guardroom, guardroom to Calvary, that pale mute figure passed almost without a word—never moving a muscle; his face set as a flint. Round him raged and stormed a wild sea of hatred, malice, and insult, but it battered at that stern humility in vain. He stood unmoved, no angry light ever flashed from his eyes, no syllable of retort passed his lips. This strength of inward repression was wonderfully rendered. Mair appeared possessed and enthralled by the sole idea of Christ as the Lamb led to the slaughter, the sheep dumb before its shearers. The intensity of this thought could only be exhibited in his walk or attitude, for he went through scene after scene almost without opening his lips, and with his hands bound behind his back; yet I can never forget the impression.

The *length* of the Trial was what the acting brought before me more than any reading ever did. It seemed endless; so that the Crucifixion with all its terrors seemed almost a relief from the suspense.

Yet what a horrible death it is! Of course it is the physical suffering which such a representation as this enforces; the fierce agony of the torn hands, the blistering heat of the burning sun, the long aching wrench of the bruised and wounded body. But is it so wrong to dwell somewhat upon this side of the Cross as we are apt to imagine? Bodily

suffering is so closely bound up with spiritual anguish that it is hopeless to attempt a complete severance. As far as we can see, spiritual greatness may tend not to deaden pain, but to intensify it; to the pure and sensitive soul, bodily agony may assume more fearful proportions than to the dogged endurance of a coarser nature; and though high thoughts and the enthusiasm of faith may absorb the spirit so as to numb the pangs of the flesh, yet it is just at the crisis of His anguish that we gather from Scripture that our Lord was, in some mysterious sense, most entirely "emptied of His God-head." He was left alone, we must suppose, with the bitterness of the body, drinking the dregs of Humanity. For the central fact of Christianity is not the Divinity of a man, but the Humanity of a God; not life out of life, so much as life out of death; and its power to salvation must be sought after, not only in the Light unquenchable, but in the dark desolation of the Body broken and the Blood shed.

And fearfully as we realized His sufferings, the unconquerable might of the Spirit was all the more strongly asserted as the Christ turned his dying head on the Penitent Thief, or as he let the soft words of consolation drop on the woman who had borne him and the man whom he had loved. I cannot conceive how anything but the visible representation could have given such startling force to this effect. At the moment when you are shaken and oppressed by the horrors of the Passion, when you can hardly believe that the Pharisees did not sicken at the sight of such racking torture—at that supreme moment of all, not only does loving "memory hold its seat," but the thief casts himself in all the glory of fast confidence on the breast of that very Sufferer, and you are shocked into the thought that there where you have seen nothing but an object of poor and superficial pity, a dying thief pierced to, and acknowledged, the sole power in heaven and earth. The very compassion which the Dramatic interest had so deeply excited only sufficed to raise to untold heights the sublimity of that deed of Faith; the Theatric climax had been reached, and the stage was no longer the slave of a weak sentimentalism, but had lifted its audience up into the energising air of moral action.

The end was most awful. The Christ shook, and panted,

and heaved himself up as if wrung with the cruel torture of those biting nails. Below him, the soldiers dived, and swore, and laughed in brutal glee: the Pharisees strode by, wagging their heads, with their triumphant "Save thyself." It seemed fiendish to leave him hanging there in those tearing agonies. At last, his lips moved with the final effort of the death-struggle; the last words, slow and heavy, tolled through the breathless theatre; and then his head sank down upon his breast, and his body drooped in lifeless languor; as the sky swooned, and the thunder rattled, a boy rushed in to the startled Pharisees with the news that "the veil of the Temple was rent." People and soldiers hurriedly dispersed in fear and dread, amidst the subdued scoff of the audience, and we were left with those three white figures gleaming motionless against the dark background, while the legs of the thieves are broken and the side of our Saviour is pierced, fearful sights both of them; the piercing being done with a reality that made one shudder: and then the horrible iron was drawn out of his bloody hands and feet, and with a lovely tenderness, a long white linen cloth was wound round the mangled body and lowered it gently to its mother's lap; and as it lay at last, stark and rigid, in the quiet tomb, with the mother at its head, and the Magdalene at its feet, the curtain fell.

The acting of the Christ may be thought to lack energy in the exciting scenes, to be almost too quiet. Where Mair excels is in the expression of pensive sorrow, and in preserving the dignity of patient endurance; the magnificence of humility, undisturbed by every kind of insult and degradation. I have mentioned in what scenes this last power shone out. As an instance of the first, nothing could be more striking than his carriage and manner in the Last Supper. He passed round the room from Apostle to Apostle with perfect ease, yet with a solemnity that bespoke the weight of responsibility laid upon him in that historic scene. Both ceremonies, that of washing the feet and of giving the Bread and Wine to each, were calculated to try the powers of an actor, and few could have preserved their natural gracefulness throughout as did Joseph Mair. When they all rose from the sacrificial meal and the hymn of the hidden Chorus stole over the stage, the Christ appeared as if overshadowed with

the awe of that mysterious hour. He lingered about the room as if loth to leave the table at which the last drop of earthly wine had been drunk by him, loth to break up the last quiet home-like evening that he should ever spend with the friends with whom he had taken such sweet counsel. They stood round him, the men who would so often, in the days to come, and the work given them to do, turn back in heart to the vivid memories of that Last Supper, wondering at the secret communings with the unseen world which seemed to crowd on their Master's soul with unutterable and unfathomable intensity. Alone one felt he was ; alone in the great deeps of thought, longing for the human sympathy which was powerless to reach him, with that far-away look in his eyes which men have when their vague and infinite yearnings cannot find adequate expression in the things of clay. Mair just caught that look of failure which hangs about a last farewell, however earnest ; a failure we often feel to express all we mean—failure to mould the occasion with that power and greatness that we know belongs to it, failure to raise the circumstances to the height and rarity befitting our intent and high-wrought passion. This is the sort of impression that came over me as Mair looked, for the last time, round that "upper chamber," and the feeling of sadness that clouded him seemed appropriate to a time of which the vast and mysterious meaning could be known by no one but the Saviour ; a time of which the intense pathos had to lie hidden and smothered in His heart ; a time which seemed to gather into itself, as the bitter Passion drew nigh, the awful spirit of the Prophecy ; "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with Me ; and I looked and there was none to help : and I wondered and there was none to uphold."

Apart from the Christ, no actor stood out in marked prominence from the rest ; he stood alone by the nature of his part, and of course Judas, and Peter, and John, and Pilate were more important, and so more impressive than the rest. But the idea I got was that all or any of the minor performers would have done just as well as the major actors if they had had their parts. This universality of good acting gave the play a spirit and a force

which no professional stage can ever hope to reproduce. The charm of it has been attained by one London theatre in very light pieces : but if any passionate acting is ever attempted, the setting of it ruins the finest jewel. The difficulty that checks Shakespearean revivals is not merely that of finding an Othello or an Iago, but of securing a Cassio, an Emilia, a Roderigo, a Brabantio. We all know the voice and accent of a stage Duke of Venice. Now the beauty of the Ammergau Play is that there is an utter absence of anything stilted. Every one is natural ; no one tries to overdo his part, yet each does it as if he had lived for it and nothing else. From S. John to S. Peter down to the boy with a pitcher of water, every one threw his whole heart into the Play, and so nothing was wanting to his acting, and nothing was forced and artificial. It was delightful to see old Simon ask our Lord to dine with him ; most delightful to see the maids introduce S. Peter and S. John to the guardroom : most delightful of all were the Council scenes in the Sanhedrim in which Annas shone pre-eminent. He was certainly the best, if anybody is to be singled out as better than the others. With perfect dramatic skill, he is contrasted with Caiaphas, just as was Pilate with Herod : no opportunity for these delicate shades of character was lost. Caiaphas is the old Tory, grown old under the old state of things, and naturally finding it impossible to understand the need of change ; oppressed with the trouble and turmoil that new ideas excite, it seems to him as if only crime and wickedness could ever break in upon the happy peace and quiet of the faith of Abraham. Annas is young and vigorous, and has all the spirit and energy of a man of strong but narrow convictions ; a spirit which is easily inflamed into uncompromising fierceness. His was the zeal of common-sense fired by unhesitating determination. His ardent singleness of purpose was so untempered by imagination, that it was blind to all but its aim. Thus religious earnestness becomes obstinacy, and the very eagerness of his resolute single-mindedness takes the form of self-seeking malignancy. His was just that character which seems so very good in a good cause, and so very bad in a bad one. This was held to capitally throughout by the actor.

This praise of the general spirit and run of the Play, which cannot be overstated, and is justified by the fact that the liveliness of it never drooped throughout the whole eight hours, must, nevertheless, be limited to the men. With the exception of the maids above-mentioned, who acted charmingly, the women's acting was strained and feeble. Not that it was ever offensive, but it lacked character and force. The Virgin looked her part well, but she wailed too much ; besides the women's voices have to be pitched very high, and they are not very pleasant in tone.

The tableaux are as good as good can be. The arrangement of them is marvellously picturesque. The performers stand so still that you can hardly believe that they breathe. The attitudes are most expressive and full of energy and life. There is no noise, no hurry about the getting ready. The groups are managed in exact obedience to the most formal rules of art. The strictness with which the main lines and curves were preserved reminded one of the best Greek Pediments. The subjects are chosen with remarkable ingenuity and care, and will well repay study.

Altogether I do not know where to find fault in these representations ; they were quite lovely. The Bride of the Canticles was the poorest. The most striking to me were the departure of Tobias, the falling of the Manna, the coat of Joseph brought back to the old father. This last was a touching picture : the old man is sitting at his quiet cottage door, and the brothers are energetically holding out the coat and pointing to the blood-gouts upon it. The whole village must take part in the crowded scenes, little tiny children and all, some of them not five years old, I should think, yet the management of them never suffered the slightest hitch, unless it were Tobias's dog, which got up and ran off before the curtain was quite down to the delight of the audience. How everything went on so smoothly is to me the greatest marvel of all. It is difficult enough to keep six or seven people in order and in their places ; but behind-scenes at Ammergau must have been crowded 250 or 300 people, some for the Jews in the tableaux, some for the Jews in the dialogue, etc., with continual changings of dress and a quick succession of scenes, one close on another. The rejection of the proud

Vashti was a powerful and, to me, a novel Old Testament type ; and beautifully appropriate to the Last Supper seemed to me the bringing in of the bunch of grapes, a pledge of the far-away Promised Land to the wanderers in the Desert.

I suppose the most astonishing feature of the Play to the ordinary Englishman is its purely Biblical character. The Scriptural history is followed with exact and literal attention. The Scriptural facts and Scriptural words are all reproduced : no important incident at all is taken from tradition ; even S. Veronica though she is allowed her handkerchief, is robbed of her miraculous picture. So it is that here in this remote Catholic peasantry is discovered a close and delicate appreciation of the Bible's simple tale, such as no Protestant villager that I ever heard of could approach, and none but the most educated and refined Protestants surpass. There is no attempt to push the Virgin forward or to cloke S. Peter's sin. In the Apostolic conversations Judas is more prominent than S. Peter. One little incident, derived I suppose from tradition, appeared to me to be touched with a peculiar dramatic grace. When the rough soldiers come near to break our Lord's legs, as they have done to the thieves, the Magdalene starts up in jealous horror from her position at the foot of the Cross, and stays the executioner's arm as she points at Christ to show that He is already lifeless.

What then after all, are we to think of the Sacred Drama ? Anyhow the theoretical view has much to be said for it ; for evidently here alone can we see the greatest and purest qualities of acting combined, the performance unstained by any artificial and professional tinge, the performers unslurred by the filth that has hung about the modern stage, the subject the highest that can be conceived. It has enlisted on its side the deep interest of a religious vow, the solemnity of ancient tradition, the dignity of hereditary glories. All this is used with subtle skill, to enforce the full meaning and beauty of the World's Tragedy.

But there are practical difficulties, practical dangers, it will be said. So there are, and very great ones indeed, but they cannot I think be said to have come to the fore in this particular case. As to my personal feelings, at least, I have but little to withdraw from the general praise. The idea of

being shocked never came across me when I was once seated there. The actors were too impressed with the mystic and awful importance of the scenes they represented to allow any uncomfortable feeling to creep in. The profanity which startles the blood out of your face is not to be looked for in this life of Jesus as interpreted by the Old-World spirit of Catholicism, but in the *Vie de Jésus* as read in the light of the New-World criticism. The only thing that jarred upon my sense of propriety was the easy way in which the audience passed from awe to laughter. They seemed to have no notion of due decorum and decent etiquette, but gave open vent to any momentary impulse, and the impulses seemed to come and go with the quick rapidity that astonishes us in children. They laughed heartily at the noise which was intended to represent the cock-crow in S. Peter's Denial scene: they laughed at the entrance of Barabbas; they laughed even at the Good Thief when he let his head wag to and fro to simulate death, as they removed him from his cross. But the passing merriment did not in the least interfere with the solemn hush of the next second, it passed off at once, unhampered by the anxious probings of reflection. Still this showed that they did not "look before and after" so diligently as the full-grown man is expected to do.

Another touch of rudeness might perhaps be discovered in the manner in which the Sanhedrim and the mob express their sentiments; they all speak the same words at once. This is certainly conventional, not to say primitive, and the effect at first is almost comic. Here, I thought, is a gregariousness, a want of individualisation, a tendency to take refuge in symbolism and to be content with it, which shows that thought has not reasoned itself out to the uttermost. Yet even this, I soon felt half-inclined to defend, for what, in fact, can exceed the natural gregariousness of a mob? Loose as we will personal liberty from what it considers the bonds of law and custom, it only gets faster snared in the toils of public opinion. I suppose nothing surpasses a democracy in its capacity of being swayed by a catch-word or phrase, or a mob in that of being fired by the quick flame of a sudden inspiration and giving it vent in an undivided voice. I daresay that the Ammergau method of exhibiting this

tendency of bodies of men to flock together was produced by the simple, unreflecting feeling for form, for unity, for the bonds of balance and harmony in preference to the "dust and powder of Particularity," which I have mentioned as so marked throughout the Play. But, whatever the motive, or however slight the consciousness of meaning, it embodied a truth which we are apt to lose sight of, a truth too higher and more philosophical, I think, than the one we are so fond of preaching.

All through the Play, I kept repeating to myself, "This is a primitive mediæval, half-civilised peasantry, still sunk in the trammels of priestcraft; it has never known what it is to have an open Bible, and a free press; it is deprived of the blessings of the Electric Telegraph, and is about 900 years behind the present age." But it would not do. I could not but confess that I was witnessing, not only a beautiful, but a most subtle and delicate and thoughtful rendering of the Gospel History; a rendering in which the Truth was gathered up into a whole with a power and grasp that put to shame the loose and casual apprehension of this or that interesting trait or striking light, which is sufficient fodder for the weak stamina of the modern "Religious view." As to general intelligence, refinement, and dignity who could not give all he had to see a spark of it in the average English rustic or London rough? The charm of the people is indeed worth going miles to see and feel; it lights up the lovely valleys of the Bavarian and Tyrolese Alps with the magic spell of a courtesy that is never servile, and a simplicity that is never coarse. The traveller is welcomed with a heartiness that is almost friendship, and refreshed with the delightful familiarity of innocent interest. Their religion is untainted by the gloomy savageness of the Vallais; their roads are not ever and always darkened by the gory horrors that make you shudder and quake as you pass down the valleys of the Rhone; but often, as you peep with a lurking dread into the little oratories, you are cheered by the soft eyes of a Madonna which the gentle Cranach at Innsbruck has inspired, or by a quiet image of the Good Shepherd. Their services are marked by an impressive earnestness, giving them that congregational tone which to a Protestant seems so lacking to

the ordinary Mass. I saw hardly any drunkenness, and but little misery, and begging is unknown. The cottages are brilliant with pictured walls, and gay with flowers; all is clean and fresh, and bright and happy. Such a life does much to explain the style of the Play, but very little towards illustrating the meaning of progress. Progress, of course, there is in civilization, but it requires, I felt, something deeper than the *Daily Telegraph*, more profound even than the *Times* to explain in what it consists. It was impossible to talk grandly and vaguely about liberty of thought in the presence of such a character of life as I saw around me, and as the Passion-Play revealed. As for the "happiness of the greatest number," the words withered on my tongue. It takes a greater and a grander principle than can be thrown off in a newspaper article, or than can be touched on at the tag-end of this paper, to show how the quickened life of the few, in this troubled century, can be worth the awful price paid for it in the degradation of the many.

To return to the Play itself. So far as it can be looked upon as a picture, it surely has all the virtues of religious art. It unites them with the excitement and beauty of motion, and intensifies them with all the additional delights of the ear. And if the great abuse of religious art comes from its tendency to localise spiritual truth in the fleshly imagination, this danger at least is avoided by such a drama as that of Ammergau. The sight we get of Holy Persons is not rapt by the wonders of an unknown skill; the forms do not beam upon us out of the mystic heaven of an art in whose golden realms we have never trod, as in the case of painting. Here we know too much about it all to be carried off our legs by the flood of its fascinations: its machinery is well within our sphere, there is no *ignotum* that we can be tricked into taking *pro magnifico*. Mair and Flunger, Hett and Lechner, Stadler and Zwink, we know them all; their sisters and brothers are with us; honour them as we will, they are still in their own country and in their own home. The material difference between it and a picture is that in the one there is nothing but what you see, nothing but the blue and the vermillion; while in the other there is behind a human being, with in-harmonious passions concealed by an artificial state of feel-

ing. Now, the danger of this lies in its effect on the actors ; for as to the spectators, it is hopeless to speculate on what is not seen or heard. If we are morally responsible for more than a certain amount of what goes on " behind scenes," it is impossible to listen to an anthem or an oratorio, much less an opera. And as to the effect on the actors of entering into solemn and awful subjects with such dangerous intimacy, I must observe that it is remarkable that this sensitive hesitation appears only in times of doubt and difficulty, and never enters the heads of those whose reverence is the most unshaken and unswerving. Is it not the old story—the prayers of the monks sounding like blasphemy and impiety to the scepticism of the Historian ?

I saw Joseph Mair in ordinary life, and, though a tourist can only judge superficially and at hap-hazard, I can only say that the scene impressed me almost as much as the Play. We were sitting in the evening in the crowded inn, all shouting for beer and food, when suddenly there was a sort of hush, and we rose as the Christ walked in and took his seat amidst warm greetings and much shaking of hands. Nothing could be better, more dignified than his bearing ; he did not look conscious or pleased, or smile round on the company, but received the congratulations with solemn, unaffected stateliness, as if he were hardly thinking of them ; as if they were the natural tribute owed to him, but still outside his real self altogether, and with which he had nothing more to do than just bow his acknowledgment. It was impossible not to wonder what his inner thoughts were after that day's work, but just as impossible to guess them. All you saw was that his part had entered into his life, that he had not cast it off with his robes and left it in the lumber-room, but that it had hung its mysterious folds about him and around him, and that he moved in the spirit of a duty laid upon him in the village as on the stage. Faith, in fact, with him was a matter of everyday life, (this is the only explanation of this reconciliation of the secular and the religious ;) he did not feel uneasy about it, he was not suspicious or uncomfortable in it as if he was not sure whether it was his own or not. Such infinity as there was in it was not unanchored or overbalanced ; it had the true *poetic* form of religion, and

had not been so philosophised as to lose its hold on the thing and the fact which centralised it. Like a child he lived in two worlds at once.

His faith may be childlike only because it has never been shaken; but still such a faith is what we all want to get, and so far as we stop short in the process of shaking, he is a step above us. The firmer one believes, the more intimate will become the object of belief; this is the principle that leads up to a child-like faith. It is easy to us, as men, to believe in God as somewhere very far off in comparison with the difficulty of believing Him to be somewhere very near: and it is the *latter* which Christianity professes to bring home to us. Stretch this to its ultimate intensity, and the Passion-Play can be understood to be consistent with a pure and simple faith, in the hands just because it is strong in the heart.

Nor must this be limited to Joseph Mair. The faith that makes the Play possible must also be universal, common ground. It is the personal, unsystematised, indefinite character of modern belief that makes us so sensitive to its public exposition, so chary of bringing it into notice without due preparation. We cannot bear others to touch it or finger it: we shrink from any rough and ready contact of it with the world: we lay it up reverently in a napkin and hardly dare to look at it ourselves. But in acting every one who has tried it knows that it is *everything* to have the audience well with you. The slightest thrill is felt: the slightest possible coldness chills up all your powers, and makes you wonder at your own frozen stupidity and dryness: you are totally incapable of laying yourself out. It cannot be a reserved or retiring faith that inspires the Ammergau Actors; they must know themselves certain of a heart-and-soul sympathy before they can dare to launch out, with confidence and security, into such mighty waters.

Still, if a sacred drama presupposes, and can be justified only by such a height of faith as this, we must suppose that Ammergau can only have preserved such a purity by exceptionable, if not unique circumstances. I have spoken of the peculiar beauty of these peasants' lives; other facts conspire to heighten the Play's character. Besides the halo of its

origin, its religious importance is raised by its being practically alone—for the extempore performance of sacred themes which are common, I believe, in the neighbouring village fairs, are too slight to trench on its dignity, while they soften its strangeness. The people whose highest thought and feeling it represents has kept its belief pure and undefiled. Its picturesque Catholicism has never been allowed to run riot with the morbid imaginations of more southern minds, or with the grossness of northern ones. Its simplicity has been heightened by contact with the new world of Protestant severity and plainness in a way and to a degree that must be considered extraordinary. Its native refinement has preserved it free from the incongruities which so naturally and readily cluster round such performances; and above all, in contrast to the excitement of dramatic action, which tended more and more, in mediæval times, to the introduction of the supernatural, so that their plays have become known to us as "Miracle-Plays," the Ammergau versionist has, with exquisite taste and delicacy, and with perfect recognition of the true capabilities of the stage, clung to the human side of our Lord's ministry, and enforced it with all the grand plainness of S. Matthew, with the mystic flavour of S. John, yet without a single stain of that over-grown miraculousness which the fondling of the after-ages heaped upon the tale they loved. So far is this abstinence carried, indeed, that the events after the Resurrection are slurred over in too hurried a manner, perhaps, to allow for their dogmatic and didactic effect, the feeling being that wherever you touch on the supernatural, human machinery becomes inadequate. However, the people see, as in a perfect mirror, the human life which the Bible records. The morality which that life personifies is carried out in a high subjective tone which qualifies the necessarily objective character of the representation; for instance the chorus sings, on Judas's punishment, without a tinge of materiality—

" So fled Cain—Ah! whither?
From yourself you cannot fly;
In your own heart you carry
Your own Hell's agony!"

Thus it is that the self-sufficient and independent son of the

19th century may leave Ammergau, not so much with the satisfaction of having relieved the curiosity with which he entered it, as with the consciousness of rebuke and reproach in the sight of a faith purer, livelier, and not less intellectual than he has yet attained.

To me the marvels of that day take another, and a sadder colouring. For little did we know, as we sat gazing on that painted scene and felt ourselves stirred by that imagery of passion, that the curtain was already drawn for the tremendous Tragedy of War, a tragedy that would wring but too soon the heart-strings of many there with the searching anguish of an only too real woe ; would fire many there with the wild frenzy of clashing hosts, the savage hatreds of battle and slaughter. Little indeed did we think how many a son there would be torn and gashed by the bloody steel ; how many an one lie under the red heaps of carnage, with never a hand that would so much as dip a hyssop in vinegar and put it to his lips as they grew white with the hot agony of pain ; how many a mother there would feel the sword pierce her own heart also, as it drank the life-blood of her child. They may be lying dead now, as I write, those sturdy peasants—buried, far from their quiet shops of carven wood, under the stormy slopes of Wörth or the battered woods of the frozen Loire, in the conquered fields of France ! The Friday before, the last words had been spoken ; on the Saturday the theatre at Munich had rung with the cheers that told how Bavaria had sworn to follow her national leader against her hereditary foe. The thundering summons which awoke Germany to arms was at that very moment rolling down upon Ammergau ; there was even then a stir among the nations as when the wind is in the trees ; already there were voices in the air, the distant din of arming bands, deep mutterings of the gathering storm ; already far on either side of the rushing Rhine—

“ There was mounting in hot haste : the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,
And near the beat of the alarming drum.”

And even now, as the loud call swept nearer, some one in that happy theatre might have

—"Caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear,"

and wondered as the dumb shadow of the coming hour laid its cold finger on his soul.

Still, with all its sadness there is a bright light falling for me on that pleasant Sunday; for amid the harsh overthrow of modern society, the breath of ancient days that inspired the Old-World Play comes to me with a sweeter and more refreshing grace: and I can look back to that fair festival of Peace and Home and gentle Life, across the broken altars and ruined temples of a shivered Civilization, as to a green spot in a wasted land, as "to a refuge from the tempest when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall."

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